

## Destination history



Attention: Today, we begin a three-part series on this 366-acre landmark as the Army readies to leave its longtime home.

If you've never understood all that goes on in the barracks, our stories, photographs and map should bring you up to speed.

# REDISCOVERING Vancouver Barracks



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian

Troops from the 2nd Brigade of the 95th Division of the Army Reserve prepare for physical fitness testing at Vancouver Barracks on a springtime Saturday. As many as 30,000 troops moved through the barracks during World War I and World War II.

By ANDREA DAMEWOOD ♦ Columbian staff writer

**F**or more than 160 years, Fort Vancouver has been built around the presence of the U.S. Army.

But over the next 14 months, members of the National Park Service and the Fort Vancouver National Trust will be working to build a new future for the 366-acre landmark — one without the constant sight of men and women in fatigues and hundreds of Reserve soldiers doing drills on the grounds.

**TODAY:** A first step to understanding the barracks and a map that you can take to today's festivities.

**MONDAY:** Hopes and challenges for East and South Barracks.

**TUESDAY:** A look at the long-term goals for West Barracks.

As part of the 2005 Army Base Realignment and Closure Act, the Army will leave behind its longtime home in the East and South Barracks by fall 2011, dispersing to Fort Lewis and to a new reserve center in east Vancouver. The 33 acres that the Army still holds on the site will go to the Park Service, which is working to craft a master plan for how to preserve and best use the pre-World War I buildings the Army

will leave behind. Offices, museum space, and commercial and retail spots are all among the ideas.

Just across Fort Vancouver Way, the city of Vancouver and the nonprofit Fort Vancouver National Trust also have their

own dreams for shaping the West Barracks, a tract that includes the iconic (and empty) Post Hospital and the large (and also empty) Artillery Barracks.

They point to the successful \$10.9 million renovation of Officers Row and the \$2 million restoration of the Red Cross building to inspire them as they look to bring the rest of the West Barracks up to code and into modern use.

But in both the East and West Barracks, money's going to be a problem. Getting a big brick building like the Post Hospital up to seismic standards or removing the lead from the Artillery Barracks is going to take millions of dollars, officials acknowledge.

Some buildings that the Park Service declares surplus could be considered for demolition.

But the Park Service plans to remodel the 1960s visitor center that is woefully undersized to serve the more than 1 million visitors who come through every year.

A new tradition is also being established, as well. Today, a revamped fireworks show will again fill the skies above the city's link to America's past, after a one-year absence.



On the  
Web

[www.columbian.com/vancouver-barracks](http://www.columbian.com/vancouver-barracks)

Our interactive map will help you learn what each building was used for in the past and its purpose today.

### Send us your memories

Did you serve or recuperate in Vancouver Barracks? Or, did you live on Officers Row? If so, we'd love to get a written memory or photo from you. Send memories to [metrodesk@columbian.com](mailto:metrodesk@columbian.com).

### Free tours today

**Officers Row:** Every 30 minutes from 1 to 4:30 p.m. from the O.O. Howard House, 750 Anderson St.

**Vancouver Barracks:** Two tours, 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.; from Heritage Stage on Parade Grounds.

**Inside:** A detailed map of the Vancouver Barracks site with descriptions of the buildings' history and their uses today. **Pages A4-5**

